

Message Text

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50/43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-11 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01

SPC-03 FEA-02 EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 EURE-00 /125 W

----- 112722

P R 281121Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6021

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (5TH WORD PARA 7 "NO VICE TO")

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

KUWAIT PASS DOHA AND MUSCAT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SA, FR

SUBJ: FRENCH FONMIN VISIT TO JIDDA: PRESS REACTION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: LATE EVENING JAN 26 VISITING FRENCH
FONMIN JOBERT HELD HOUR LONG PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH HE
DISCUSSED PROPOSE OF HIS VISIT AND HOPES FOR FUTURE
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SAUDI-FRENCH ECONOMIC COOPERATION. JOBERT DEPARTED FOR

KUWAIT AND SYRIA JAN. 27. THERE WERE NO RPT NO REPORTS OF AGREEMENTS BEING SIGNED. END SUMMARY.

2. AS QUOTED IN LOCAL PRESS, JOBERT SAID THAT FRANCE, WHICH LOCATED CLOSE TO THE ARAB WORLD, HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN URGING CLOSER EUROPEAN-ARAB RELATIONS AND WILL RENEW EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION AT FEBRUARY EC MEETING IN BONN. HE NOTED THAT THESE RELATIONS COULD BE IMPROVED EITHER THROUGH CONTACTS BETWEEN EC AND ARAB NATIONS AS "BLOCS" OR THROUGH BILATERAL EFFORTS. SAUDI ARABIA HAS PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN WHICH ALL EC COUNTRIES CAN PARTICIPATE. AS FOR FRANCE, IT HAS CONCENTRATED ITS EFFORTS TOWARD COOPERATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL FIELDS. LATER IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE JOBERT DEFENDED FRANCE MAKING AGREEMENTS INDEPENDENT OF THE EC SAYING EACH MEMBER FREE TO CONCLUDE SUCH AGREEMENTS. HE CLAIMED FRANCE DID NOT WISH COMPETITION WITH EC PARTNERS BUT NOTED THAT FRANCE HAD SERIOUS TRADE IMBALANCE WITH SAUDI ARABIA (IMPORTS OF 3 BILLION FRANCS AS OPPOSED TO 330 MILLION IN EXPORTS) WHICH MUST BE RECTIFIED.

3. JOBERT WAS SPECIFIC IN SAYING THAT HE HAD NOT COME TO SAUDI ARABIA TO CONCLUDE A PETROLEUM AGREEMENT. HE NOTED THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS PETROLEUM AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT AND AGREEMENTS THEREFORE NOT NECESSARY. HE THEN ADDED THAT PETROLEUM AND OTHER AGREEMENTS WILL COME LATER. REFERRING TO PRESS REPORTS OF A FRENCH-SAUDI AGREEMENT RUNNING THROUGH 1975 COVERING LARGE AMOUNTS OF OIL, JOBERT AGAIN DENIED THIS WAS THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT BUT SAID SUCH AGREEMENTS ARE A PART OF THIS "IMPORTANT MATTER."

4. HE TERMED HIS PRESENT VISIT AS AIMED AT LONG-TERM COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID HE UNABLE GIVE DETAILS BECAUSE AGREEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ARE NOT YET COMPLETED AND IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR FOREIGN MINISTER TO CONCLUDE SUCH AGREEMENTS IN THREE DAYS. HE SAID A PROGRAM HAD BEEN ARRANGED FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VISITS BY OFFICIALS OF THE TWO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNTRIES. AN IMPORTANT AIM OF THIS VISIT HAD BEEN TO GET AGREEMENT ON THE FORMATION OF A COMMITTEE WHOSE CHAIRMANSHIP WOULD ALTERNATE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND SAUDI MINSTATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SAQQAF. JOBERT SAID HE HOPED TO SEE HIS SAUDI FRIENDS IN FRANCE SOON AND TO RETURN HIMSELF TO SAUDI ARABIA BEFORE END OF YEAR. HE LATER REFERRED TO POSSIBILITY OF HIS RETURNING TO SAUDI ARABIA WITHIN SIX MONTHS ACCOMPANIED BY GOVERNMENT

OFFICIALS, TECHNICAL EXPERTS, AND BUSINESSMEN.

5. JAN 28 PRESS MAKES NO MENTION OF ANY SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS HAVING BEEN CONCLUDED DURING VISIT. AFTER JOBERT DEPARTURE, MINSTATE SAQQAF MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO SAUDI NEWS AGENCY: AS RESULT MEETINGS WITH FRENCH FOREIGN MIN, I GATHER STRONG IMPRESSION RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND SAUDI ARABIA MOVING TOWARD BETTER FUTURE BECAUSE OF GOOD WILL EXISTING ON BOTH SIDES. RESULTS OF VISIT NOW CLEAR THROUGH COMMENTS MADE BY MY COLLEAGUE, M. JOBERT, AND AS RESULT STUDIES CARRIED OUT BY SAUDI-FRENCH JOINT COMMITTEE. THERE WAS COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH REGARD TO STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES IN ALL THE FIELDS WHICH WERE DISCUSSED DURING THE TALKS WHICH TOOK PLACE.

6. EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS BEEN THIN. UKAZ EDITORIAL COMMENTS THAT RELATIONS WITH FRANCE COULD SET THE PATTERN FOR IMPROVED LONG-TERM RELATIONS WITH COMMON MARKET ON THE BASIS OF COMMON INTERESTS. CLOSER ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN ARAB STATES AND EUROPE COULD MEAN GREATER POLITICAL ROLE FOR EUROPE. EDITORIAL IN NADWA LAUDS FRENCH MIDDLE EAST POLICY AND INTERPRETS JOBERT'S EMPHASIS ON DEVELOPING LONG-TERM ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AS A SIGN OF CONFIDENCE IN THE STABILITY OF THE KINGDOM..

7. COMMENT: SOUNDS INCREASINGLY LIKE NO EARLY AGREEMENT AND CONTINUED NEGOTIATIONS.
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